amar chitra katha
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THE SONS OF RAMA
Pratap Mulick

**The story of Rama and Sita is a part of India. It was first set down by the sage Valmiki in his epic poem in Sanskrit, 'Ramayana'.**

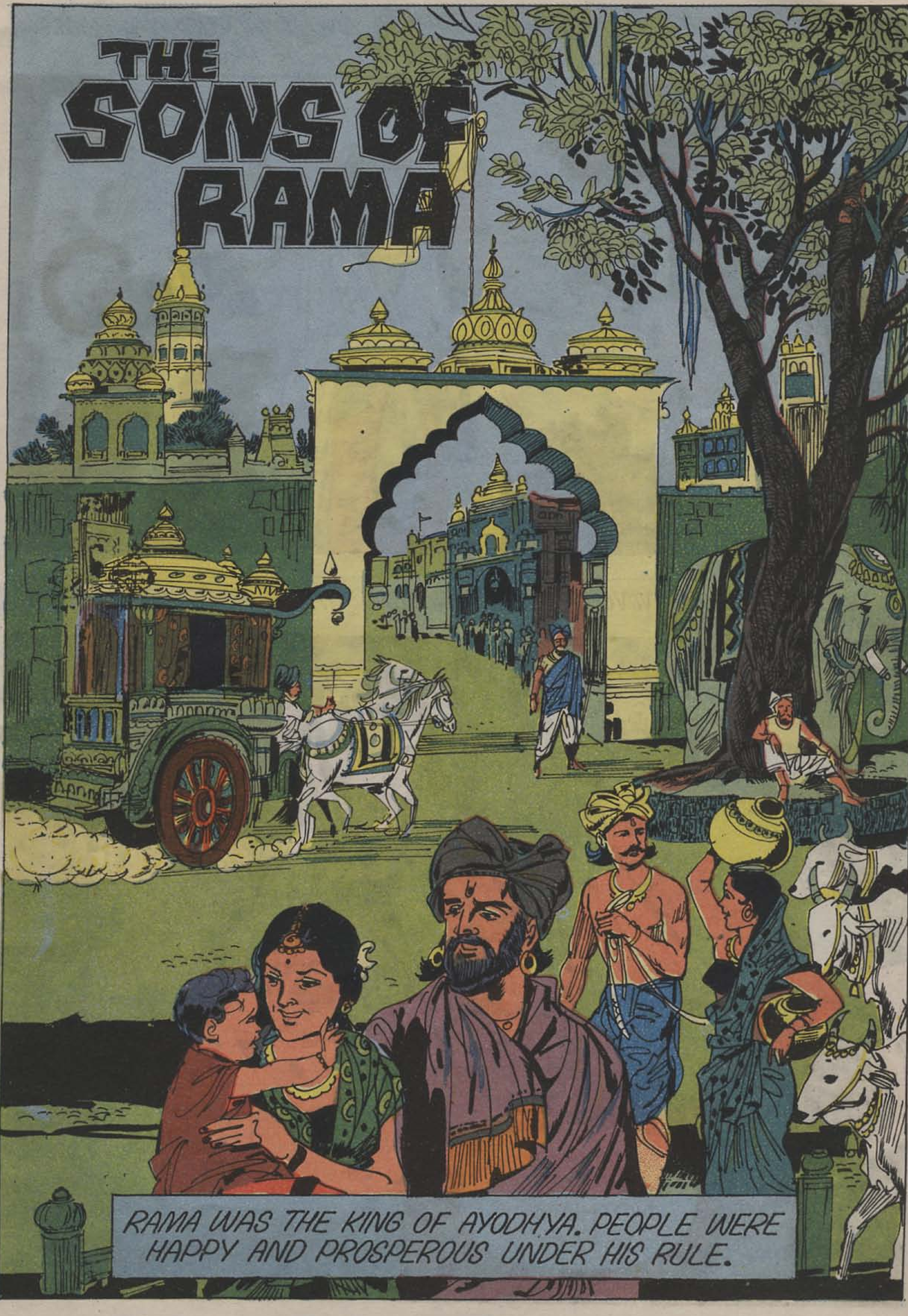
**Rama was the eldest son of Dasharatha, the King of Ayodhya. The King had three wives-Kaushalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra. Rama was the son of Kaushalya, Bharata, of Kaikeyi and Laxmana and Shatrughuna of Sumitra. As they grew up so did their fame as valiant and brave princes. Sage Vishwamitra came seeking the help of Rama and Laxmana in killing the demoness Tataka. On the way back in the land of King Janaka, Rama succeeded in winning the hand of Sita, the King's daughter. Dasharatha decided that this was the time to crown Rama King. Jealous Kaikeyi persuaded an unwilling Dasharatha to banish Rama into the forest and to crown Bharata the King. Sita and Laxmana opted to follow Rama. While in the forest the Rakshasi Shoorpanakha accosted Rama and eventually had herself disfigured by Laxmana. The angry female went and complained to her brother, Ravana, the King of Lanka. Ravana with a cunning typical of him carried Sita away. Rama and Laxmana in the course of their search for Sita came across the monkey king, Sugreeva and struck a bond of friendship with him. One of Sugreeva's assistants, Hanuman discovered Sita's whereabouts and Rama led the army of monkeys against Lanka. In the terrible battle that ensued Ravana and his associates were killed. Accompanied by Laxmana, Rama and Sita returned to Ayodhya where they were welcomed by Bharata and crowned King and Queen. But their troubles had not ended. How the suspicion of his subjects forced Rama to banish Sita even though she was pregnant and how his sons Luv and Kusha brought up in the ashram of Sage Valmiki were ultimately united with him is told in colourful pictures in the following pages.**

**Based on "UTTARAMACHARITA" of Bhavabhuti.**

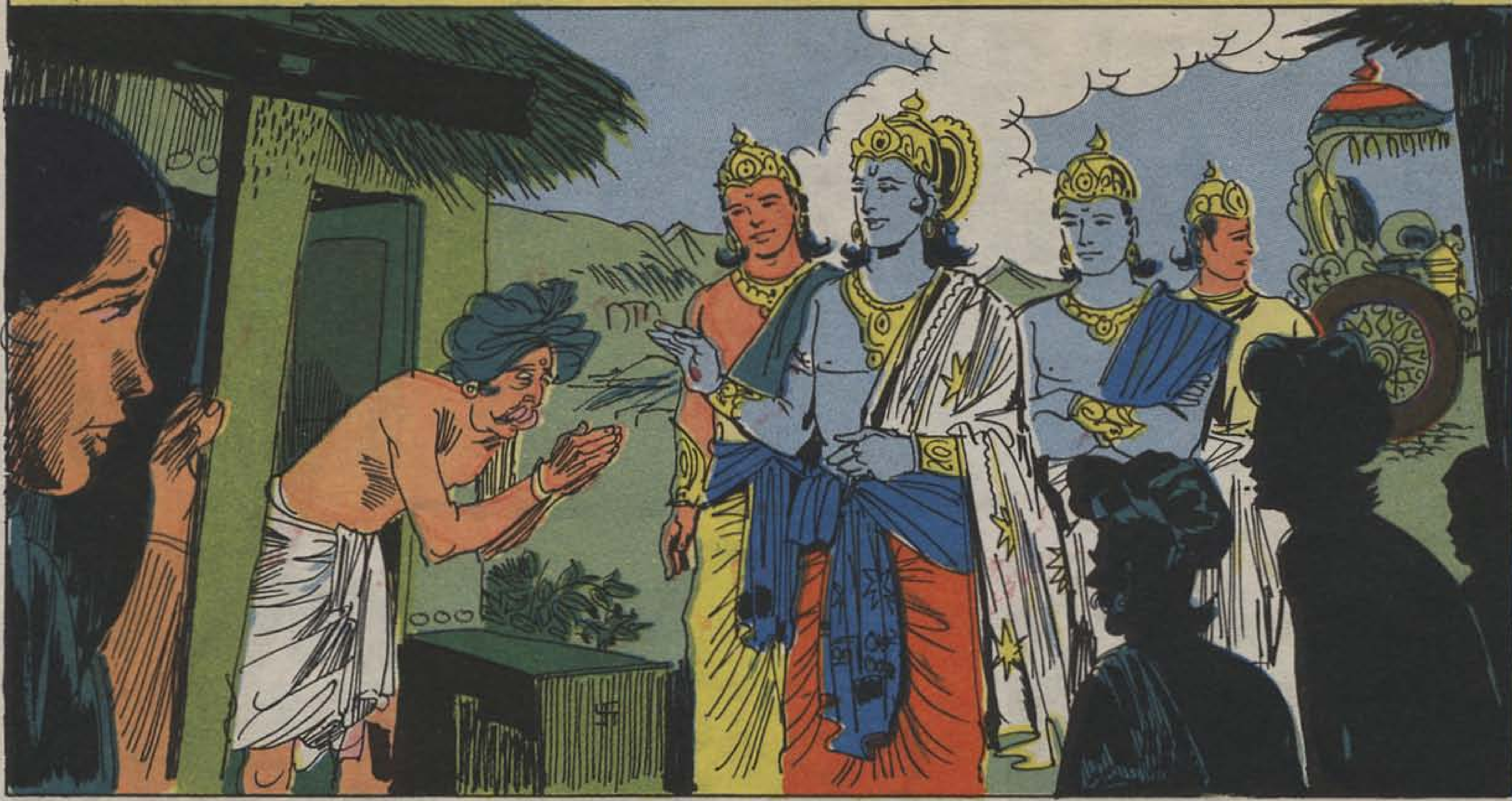
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THE SONS OF RAMA
RAMA WAS THE KING OF AYODHYA. PEOPLE WERE HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS UNDER HIS RULE.

WITH HIS BROTHERS, LAXMANA, BHARATA AND SHATRUGHNA, RAMA USED TO VISIT HIS PEOPLE AND LISTEN TO THEIR PROBLEMS...



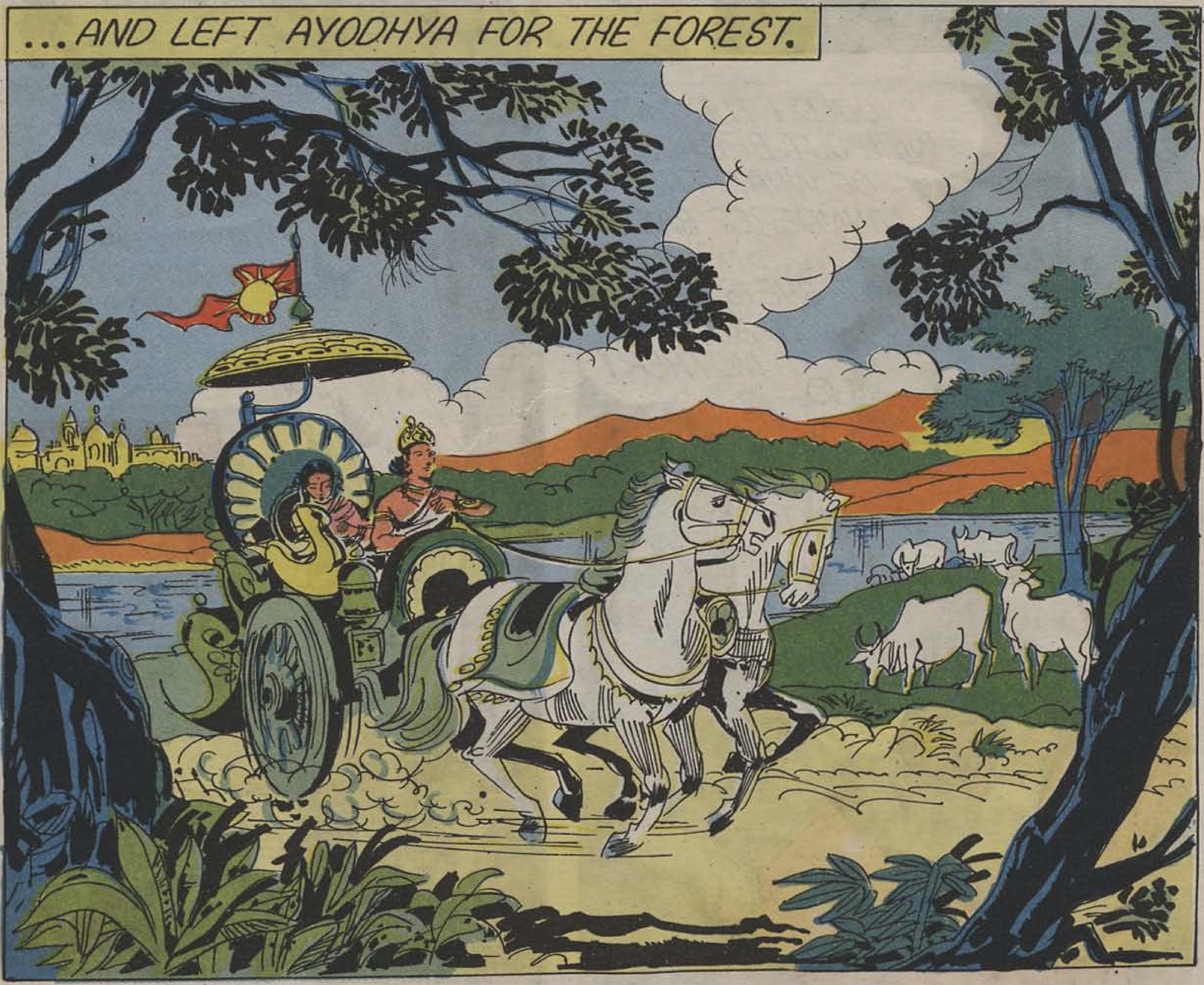
... AND EVERY EVENING WITH HIS QUEEN SITA, HE RECEIVED HIS MEN. ONE EVENING –




MAHARAJ, TODAY A LAUNDERER WAS BEATING HIS WIFE, AND HE SAID...
GET OUT OF MY HOUSE! I'M NOT LIKE RAMA WHO ACCEPTS A WIFE AFTER SHE HAS LIVED IN ANOTHER'S HOUSE!
SHOULD I TURN MY WIFE OUT BECAUSE OF WHAT THE LAUNDERER SAID? NO... NO... AND SHE IS SOON TO BECOME A MOTHER!
BUT MY FIRST DUTY IS TOWARDS MY PEOPLE... I HAVE TO SEND HER AWAY...


THE FOLLOWING DAY HE SENT FOR LAXMANA.
YOU WILL TAKE SITA INTO THE JUNGLES AND LEAVE HER THERE.
BUT...
NO BUTS, THIS IS MY DECISION!


LAXMANA GOT HIS CHARIOT READY...


...AND LEFT AYODHYA FOR THE FOREST.

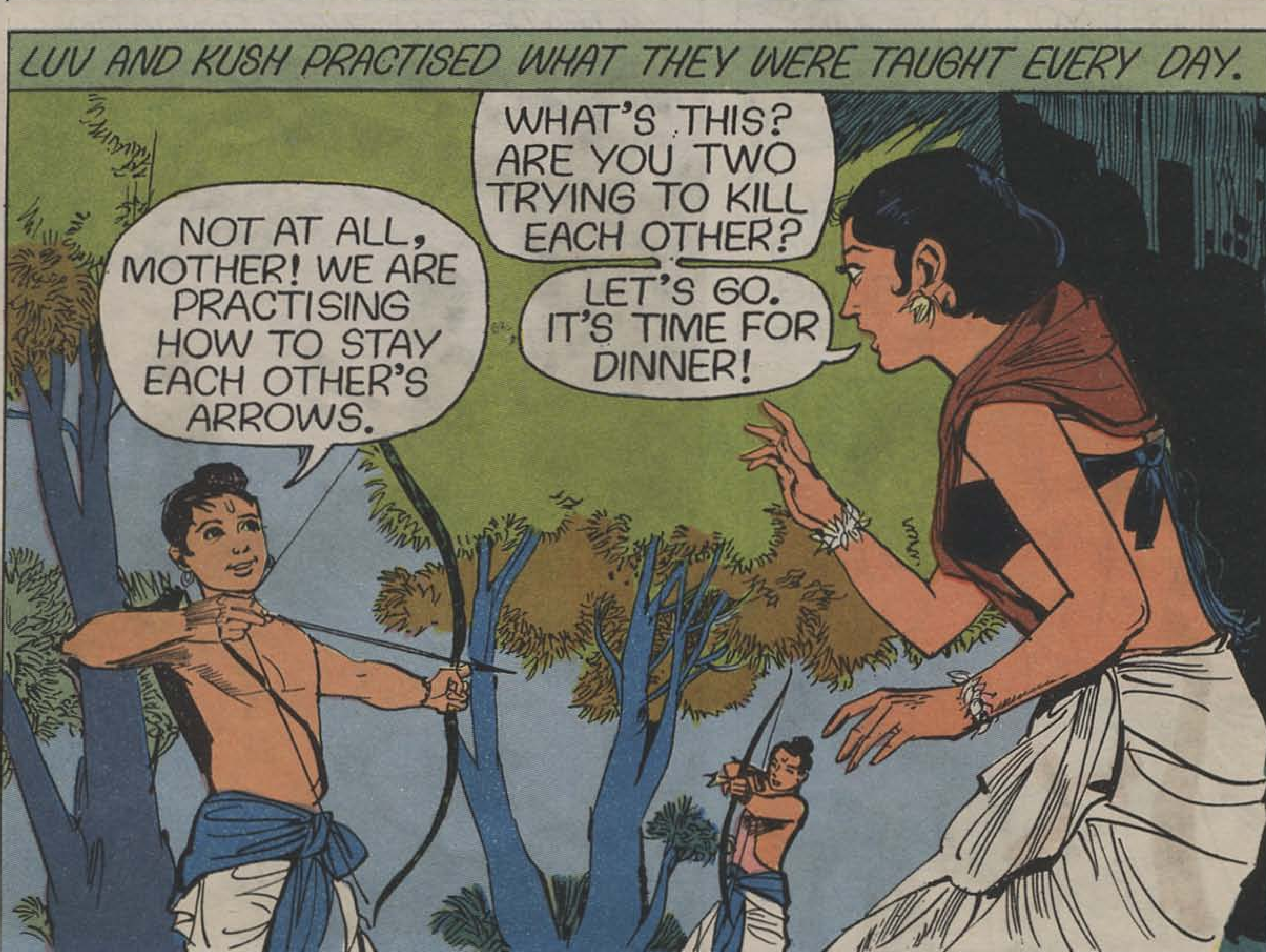

LAXMANA, THIS JUNGLE IS SO FRIGHTENING. I'M SCARED!
HOW CAN I LEAVE HER IN THIS WILD JUNGLE? BUT I MUST OBEY RAMA'S COMMAND!
AFTER LAXMANA LEFT FOR AYODHYA, SITA WAS ALONE IN THE JUNGLE.
WHERE SHALL I GO?
JUST THEN A SERPENT APPEARED.
HELP! HELP!


MAHARSHI VALMIKI! IT'S YOU!
DON'T WORRY MY CHILD - THESE ANIMALS ARE FROM MY HERMITAGE.
VALMIKI TOOK SITA TO HIS HERMITAGE.
YOU WILL LIVE HERE. NOTHING WILL BOTHER YOU!
VALMIKI'S HERMITAGE BECAME SITA'S HAVEN- SHE WAS BLESSED WITH TWIN SONS.



AS TIME PASSED, SITA'S TWIN SONS, LUV AND KUSH, GREW UP.
LUV DEAR, WHERE IS KUSH?
HERE I AM, MOTHER, BOXING THIS DEER'S EARS!
BUT THE MAHARSHI TAUGHT YOU NOT TO BE CRUEL TO ANIMALS!
IT WAS THE DEER WHO WAS BEING CRUEL TO ME!
MAHARSHI VALMIKI PERSONALLY ATTENDED TO THEIR EDUCATION.


HE TAUGHT THEM THE USE OF ARMS AS WELL.
PULL WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT, THEN LET THE ARROW GO.


LUV AND KUSH PRACTISED WHAT THEY WERE TAUGHT EVERY DAY.
WHAT'S THIS? ARE YOU TWO TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER?
LET'S GO. IT'S TIME FOR DINNER!
NOT AT ALL, MOTHER! WE ARE PRACTISING HOW TO STAY EACH OTHER'S ARROWS.


VALMIKI TOLD THEM THE STORY OF THE RAMAYANA, OF HOW RAMA BROKE THE BOW OF LORD SHIVA AND MARRIED VAIDEHI.
THAT IS NOTHING. I CAN ALSO BREAK A BOW.
"KAIKEYI BANISHED RAMA INTO THE JUNGLES FOR FOURTEEN YEARS."
I'M GOING INTO THE JUNGLES TO KEEP MY FATHER'S PROMISE!
I WANT TO GO WITH YOU!
"ONE DAY AS RAMA WENT AFTER A DEER, RAVANA KIDNAPPED VAIDEHI.
"IN THE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, RAVANA WAS KILLED BY RAMA."
VICTORY TO RAMA!


"AFTER SPENDING FOURTEEN YEARS IN EXILE, RAMA RETURNED TO AYODHYA AND WAS CROWNED KING."
ONE DAY, BECAUSE OF WHAT A LAUNDERER SAID, RAMA BANISHED VAIDEHI!
POOR VAIDEHI! RAMA WAS CRUEL, INDEED!
VALMIKI TAUGHT THEM OF "YAJNA" AND SUCH OTHER MATTERS TOO.
"SWAHA"
"SWAHA"
"SWAHA"
EVERY DAY THEY PRACTISED THE ARTS OF WAR. THEY ALSO TALKED ABOUT VAIDEHI.
I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO VAIDEHI?
IF EVER WE MEET HER, WE'LL BRING HER TO THE HERMITAGE.
THEY DID NOT REALISE THAT VAIDEHI WAS NONE OTHER THAN SITA, THEIR MOTHER.


MEANWHILE, IN AYODHYA RAMA PREPARED TO PERFORM THE ASHWAMEDHA YAJNA.
AS PEOPLE PASSED BY HIS ROYAL PALACE _
KING RAMA WILL NOW BECOME A WORLD CONQUEROR.
ALL WERE INVITED TO THE YAJNA.
THE GREAT SAGES, VISHWA-MITRA AND NARADA ARE HERE TOO.
THEY ARE STAYING WITH THE SAGE VASHISHTHA.


RULERS FROM ALL AROUND CAME WITH THEIR ARMIES.
WHAT HAVE THESE ARMIES TO DO WITH A YAJNA?
THEY HAVE COME JUST TO WITNESS IT AND, IF NEED BE, TO FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF RAMA.


THE YAJNASHALA WAS DECORATED; PREPARATIONS WERE NOW COMPLETE.


BUT NARADA HAD SOMETHING TO SAY TO VISHWAMITRA.
HOW CAN RAMA PERFORM THE YAJNA WITHOUT HIS WIFE SITA?
HE WILL HAVE TO USE A GOLDEN STATUE OF HER!
A WHITE HORSE WITH BLACK EARS WAS GOT READY FOR THE YAJNA.
THE HORSE IS MAGNIFICENT!
EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENTS-EXCEPT FOR SITA'S ABSENCE.
THE MENTION OF SITA SET RAMA THINKING.
I SHOULD SEND LAXMANA TO LOOK FOR SITA.
NO, MY PEOPLE MAY NOT LIKE IT. A GOLDEN STATUE WILL HAVE TO DO!


"SWAHA!"
"SWAHA!!"


VISHWAMITRA TIED THE CEREMONIAL GOLD LEAF ON THE HORSE'S FOREHEAD.
THE HORSE WAS THEN LET LOOSE AND THE ARMY FOLLOWED IT.


AS THE HORSE ENTERED A RULER'S DOMAIN–
WHAT SHALL WE DO, MY MINISTER?
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING. WE ARE TOO WEAK. EVEN RAVANA WAS NO MATCH FOR RAMA.
MANY A RULER ACCEPTED RAMA'S SUPREMACY WITHOUT A FIGHT.
NOBODY CHECKS THE HORSE.
WHO DARES FIGHT THIS ARMY?
LUV AND KUSH SAW THE HORSE FROM AFAR.
KUSH, LET'S CATCH THAT HORSE!
LOOK AT THIS, LUV. ANYONE WHO HOLDS THIS HORSE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT!
THEN WE WILL FIGHT!



LUV AND KUSH TIED THE HORSE TO A TREE.
ONE OF RAMA'S SOLDIERS CAME UP TO THEM.
CHILDREN! GIVE THAT HORSE BACK TO ME!
SHAME ON YOU FOR BEGGING.
AND A TERRIBLE BATTLE FOLLOWED.


ONE OF THE SOLDIERS HASTENED BACK TO SHATRUGHNA.
SIRE! THOSE TWO CHILDREN ARE IMPOSSIBLE! THEY HAVE MADE FOOLS OF US!
I'LL TEACH THEM HOW TO BEHAVE!
HE'S VERY PROUD OF HIS CHARIOT!
WE'LL SHOW HIM!
LUV, SHOOT AT THE WHEEL!
H-E-R-E GOES!
JUST ONE SHOT TOOK CARE OF HIM!



AS SHATRUGHNA FELL, RAMA'S ARMY FLED IN DISARRAY.
I'VE LOST A SHOE!
I HAVE LOST MY SWORD!
SOME OF THE SOLDIERS WENT UP TO RAMA.
VICTORY TO RAMA. TWO YOUNG BOYS... JUST TWO OF THEM...
YES SIRE, THEY MADE HIM FALL FROM HIS CHARIOT!
SHATRUGHNA FALLEN!!
RAMA WAS DISTURBED.
TWO CHILDREN, AND SO BRAVE! WHO COULD THEY BE? YOU TAKE OVER, LAXMANA. GO AND CAPTURE THOSE BOYS.
I WILL GO AT ONCE!


LAXMANA MARCHED WITH THE ARMY.
GLORY TO RAMA!
LAXMANA WAS LOST IN THOUGHT.
TWO YOUNG BOYS! UP AGAINST RAMA!
GO AWAY NOW, BOYS!
TAKE A LOOK AT HIM FIRST.


LUV YOU STAY WITH THE HORSE; I'LL DEAL WITH HIM!
DON'T YOU WANT TO LIVE, LAD?
YOU BETTER PRAY FOR YOUR OWN LIFE!
AND KUSH SHOT AN ARROW...
...WHICH TOOK OFF WITH LAXMANA'S HELMET.
...THE SOLDIERS WHISPERED AMONGST THEMSELVES.
THEIR ARROWS SEEM TO FLY BY MAGIC!
WE SHOULD MAKE FRIENDS WITH THEM.

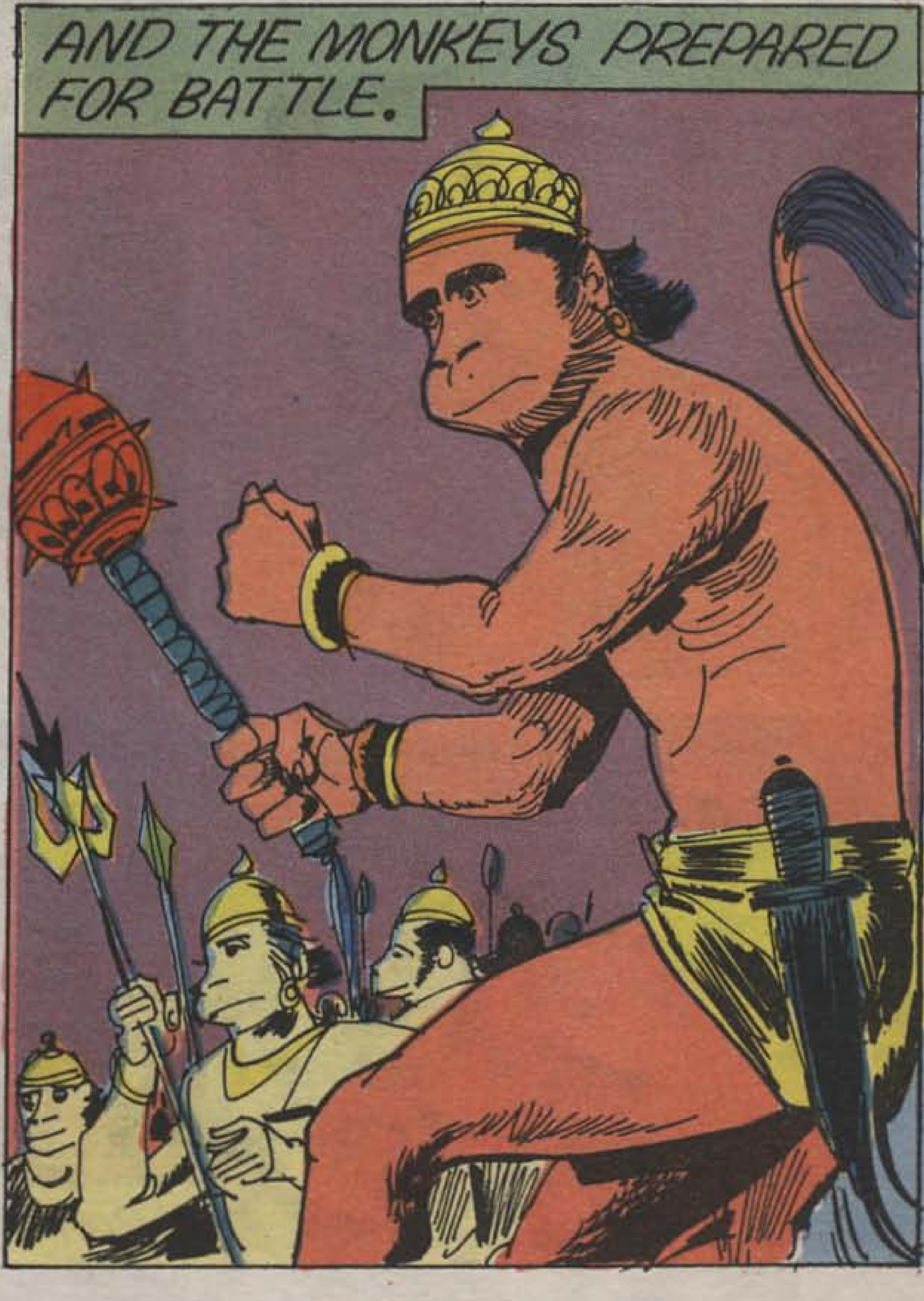

KUSH AND LAXMANA ENGAGED IN A FURIOUS BATTLE.


KUSH WAS WOUNDED IN THE FIGHT.


ENRAGED, LUV CHALLENGED LAXMANA TO A DUEL.
I WON'T LET YOU LIVE AFTER WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO KUSH!

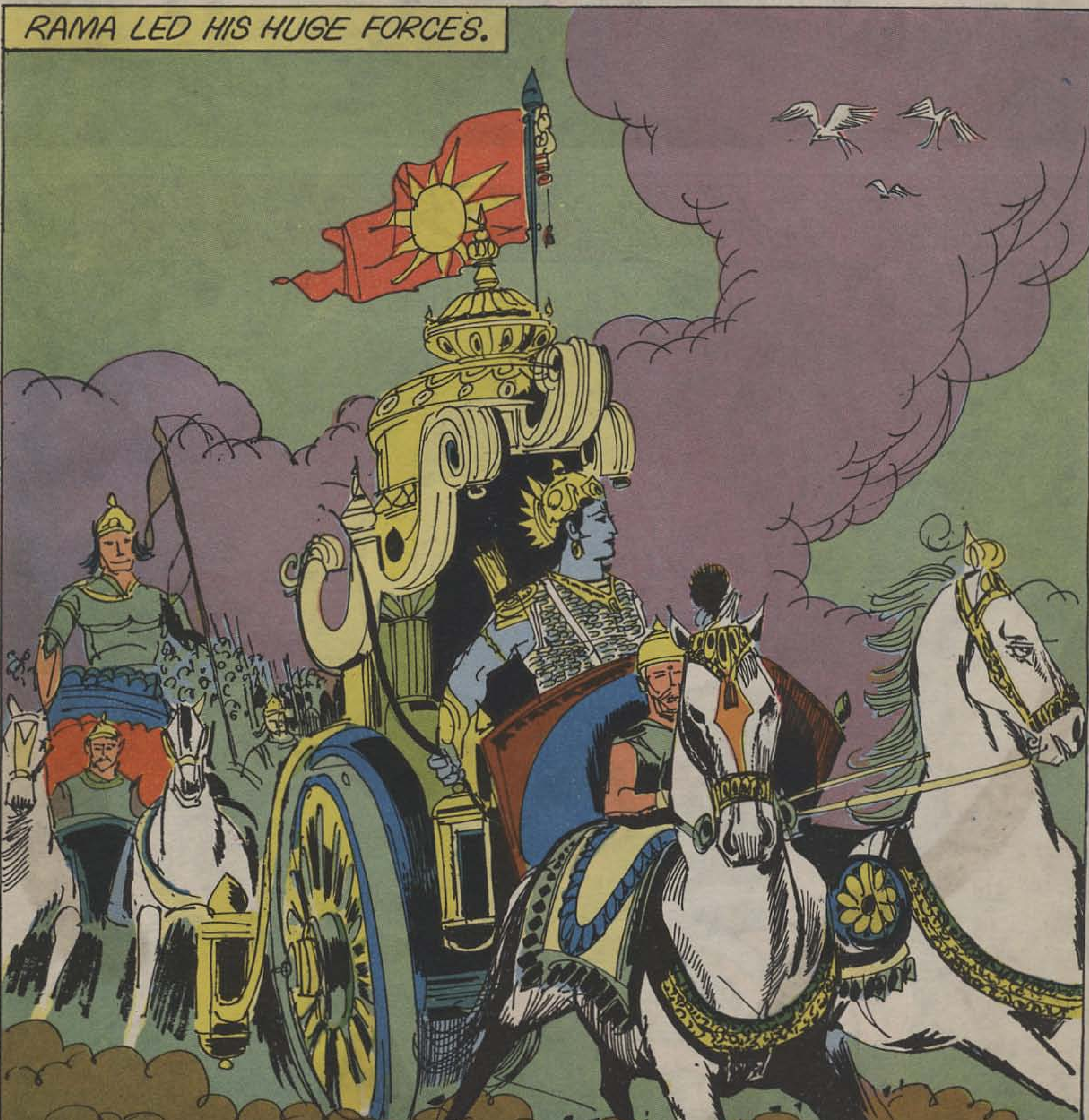

LUV HAD HIS REVENGE. LAXMANA FELL UNCONSCIOUS.
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
LAXMANA HAS FALLEN!


RAMA WAS VERY UPSET WHEN HE HEARD THE NEWS.
NOW BHARATA, YOU MUST GO WITH THE MONKEY FORCES.


AND THE MONKEYS PREPARED FOR BATTLE.


HANUMAN ALSO ACCOMPANIED BHARATA.
LUV AND KUSH EXCHANGED MEANINGFUL LOOKS.
SAY, LET'S MAKE MONKEYS OUT OF THESE MONKEYS!
THE SOONER THE BETTER!
INSTANTLY AN ARROW STRUCK HANUMAN'S MACE.
THESE BRATS DESERVE TO BE KILLED!
THE MONKEY FORCES WENT INTO ACTION AGAINST LUV AND KUSH...
...BUT PROVED UNEQUAL TO THE TASK.


BHARATA ALSO FELL AND HANUMAN HURRIED BACK TO RAMA.
A THOUSAND PARDONS, O RAMA!
DON'T LOSE HEART, HANUMAN. I WILL COME MYSELF.


RAMA LED HIS HUGE FORCES.



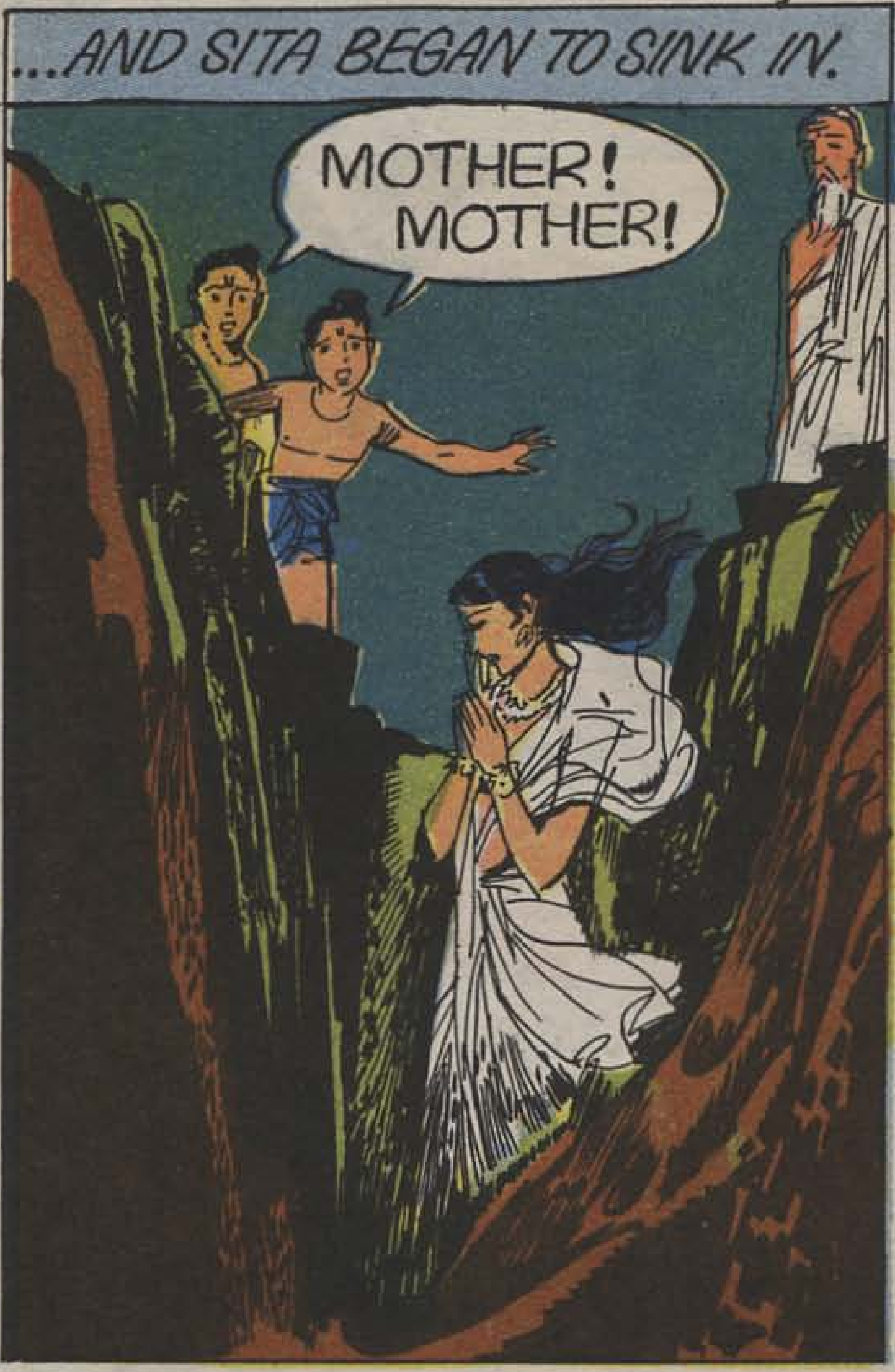
RAMA DECIDED TO FIND OUT ABOUT THE CHILDREN.
WHO ARE YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER?
WE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT OUR FATHER. BUT SITA IS OUR MOTHER. BUT WHY ARE YOU SO INTERESTED ANYWAY?
THOUGH THE BOYS DID NOT KNOW THIER FATHER, RAMA RECOGNISED THEM. HIS BOW DROPPED FROM HIS HANDS.
YOU ARE SITA'S...
LOOK, HE IS FAINTING! AND JUST BECAUSE OF WHAT WE SAID. LET'S GO AND TAKE CARE OF HIS ARMY.

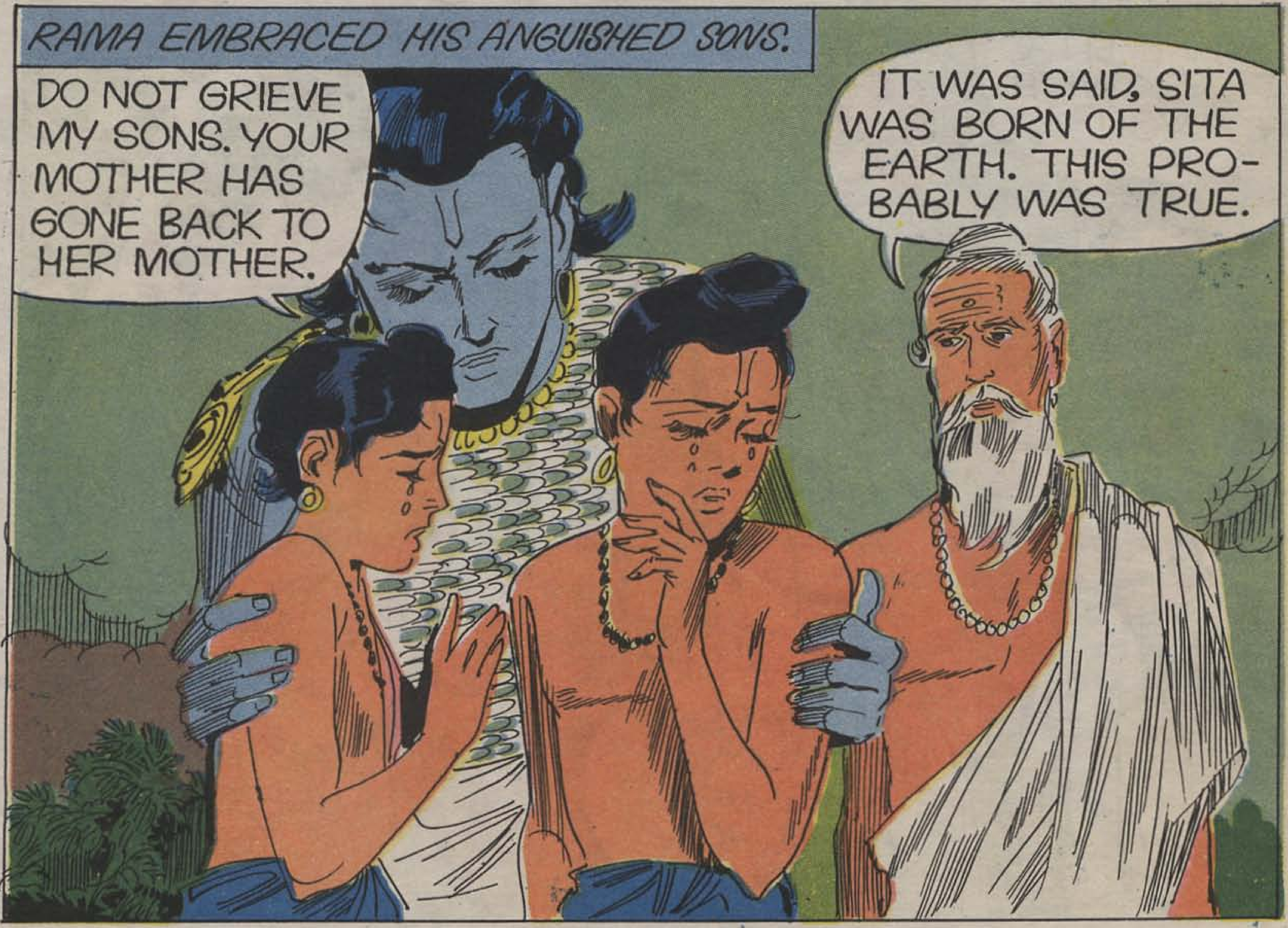

SOON LUV AND KUSH HAD THE MONKEYS AT THEIR MERCY.
THEY TIED HANUMAN NEAR THE HORSE.
MOTHER WILL BE PLEASED TO SEE OUR CAPTIVE MONKEY!
THE MONKEYS DEALT WITH, LUV AND KUSH RETURNED TO RAMA.
GOODNESS! HE IS STILL UN-CONSCIOUS!
LET'S TAKE AWAY HIS CROWN.


WITH THE HORSE AND THE CROWN, LUV AND KUSH APPROACHED THEIR MOTHER.
WE HAVE BROUGHT HOME PRECIOUS BOOTY, MOTHER!
HEAVENS! NO! DID YOU KILL HIM?
HE DID NOT DIE MOTHER, HE IS ALIVE!
AS RAMA RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS VALMIKI BROUGHT LUV AND KUSH TO MEET HIM.
HERE ARE YOUR SONS, RAMA!
MAHARSHI!
VAIDEHI OF THE RAMAYANA IS NONE OTHER THAN OUR MOTHER, LUV!


HANUMAN WAS STILL TIED UP.
WON'T YOU EVER UNTIE ME, BOYS?
SAY WITH ME, GLORY BE TO RAMA!
VALMIKI BROUGHT SITA FORWARD.
YOU MUST TAKE SITA BACK WITH YOU.
MAHARSHI, HAVING ONCE SENT HER AWAY, HOW CAN I...
SITA COULD NOT BEAR THE HUMILIATION ANY MORE.
MOTHER EARTH, IF I AM PURE, GATHER ME TO YOUR LAP!


...AND THE EARTH PARTED UNDER HER FEET...
MOVE AWAY, MOTHER! THE EARTH IS FALLING APART!
YOU HAVE GRANTED MY WISH, O MOTHER.


...AND SITA BEGAN TO SINK IN.
MOTHER! MOTHER!


RAMA EMBRACED HIS ANGUISHED SONS.
DO NOT GRIEVE MY SONS. YOUR MOTHER HAS GONE BACK TO HER MOTHER.
IT WAS SAID, SITA WAS BORN OF THE EARTH. THIS PROBABLY WAS TRUE.


WITH HIS SONS AND HIS ARMY, RAMA RETURNED TO AYODHYA.
THE BOYS PROVED THEIR WORTH! ONE DAY THEY WILL MAKE GREAT RULERS!


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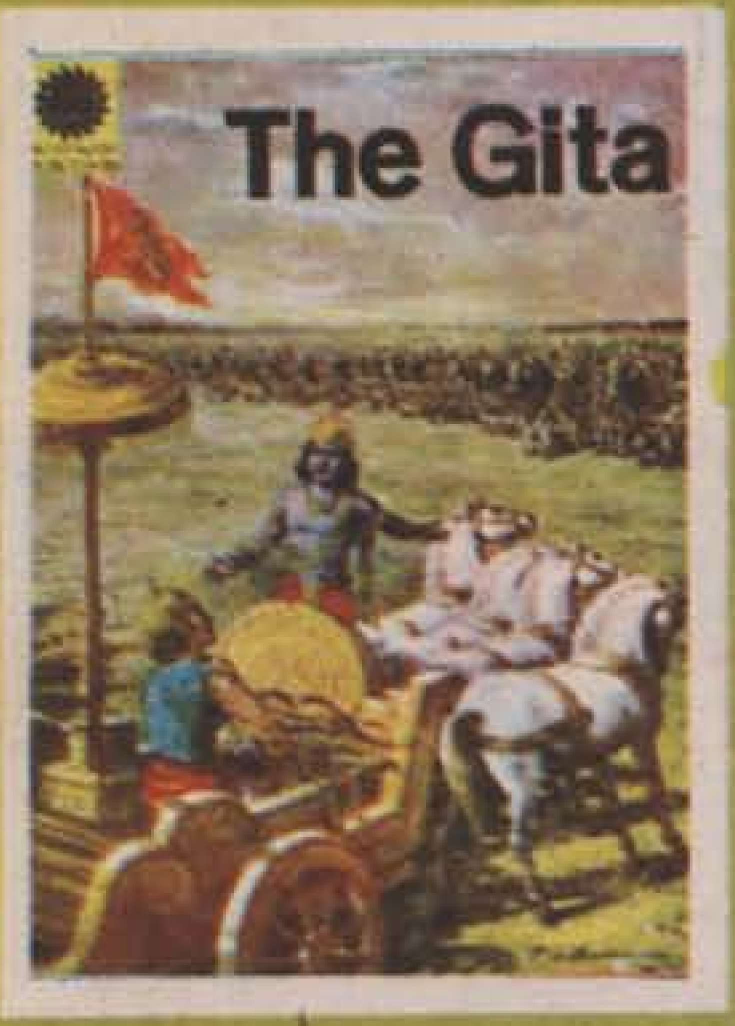
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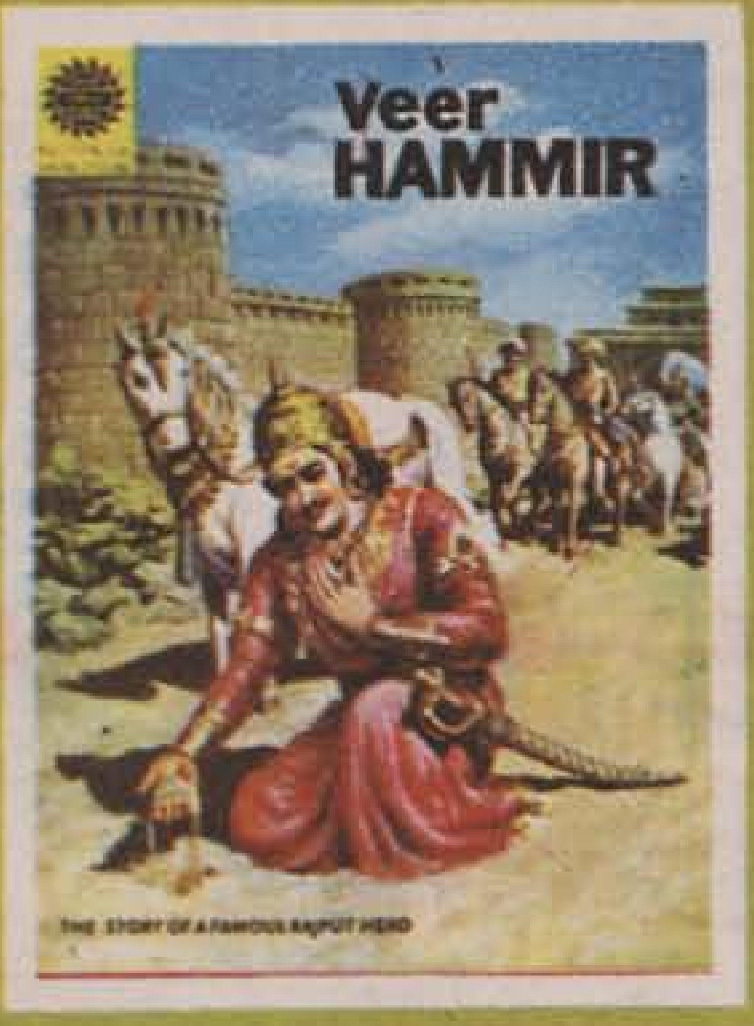
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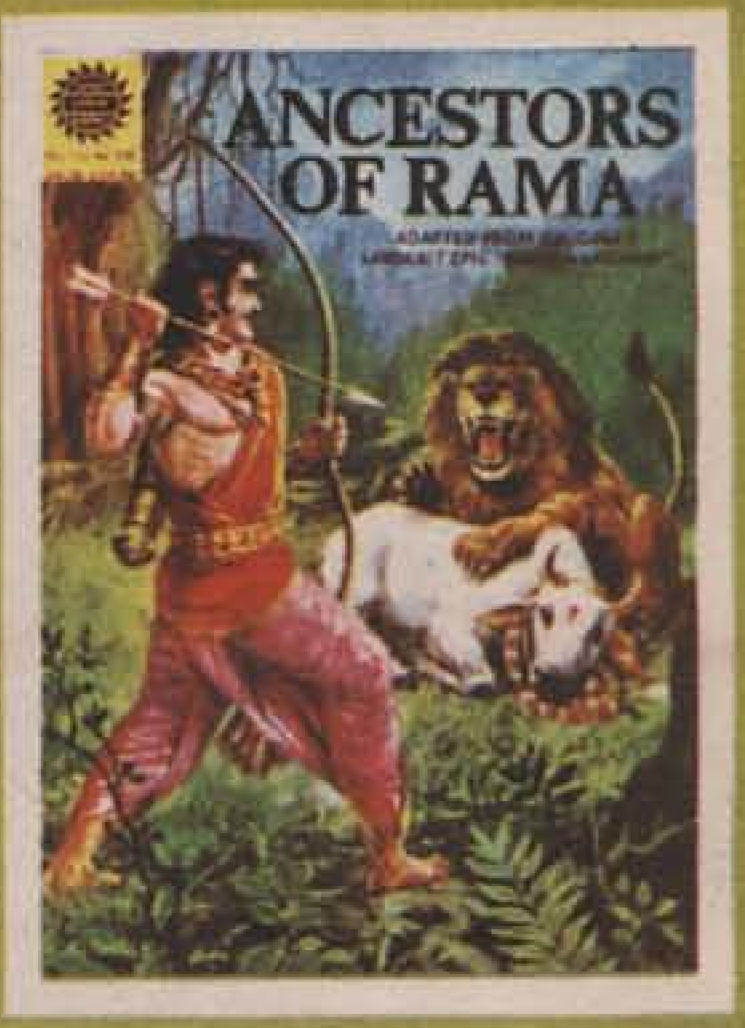
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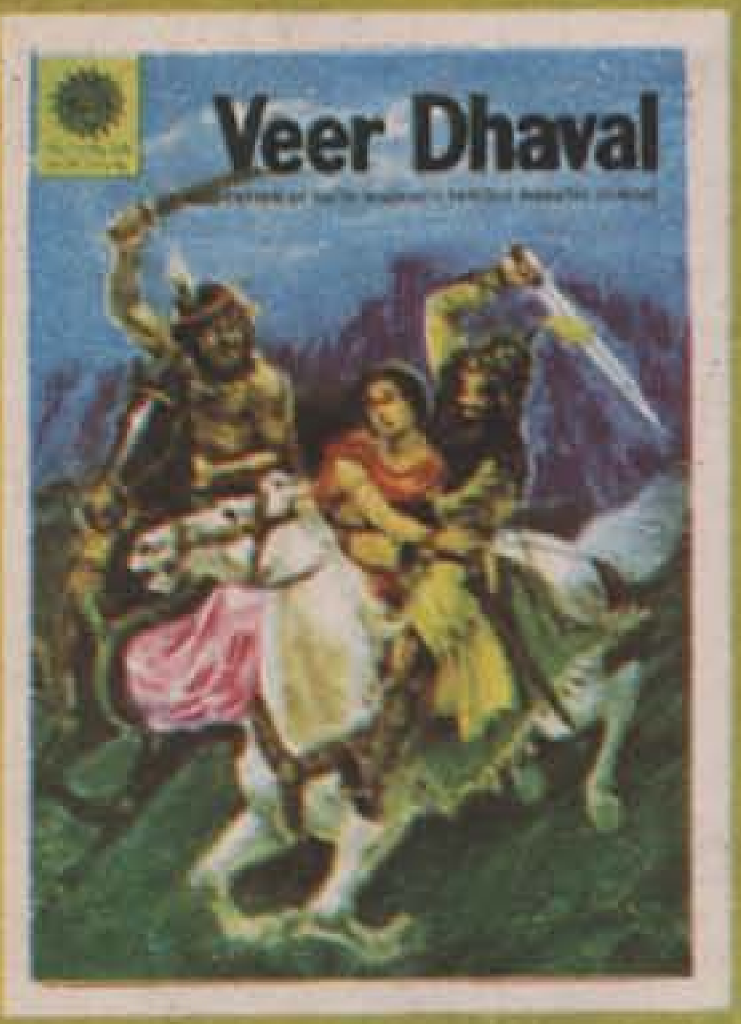




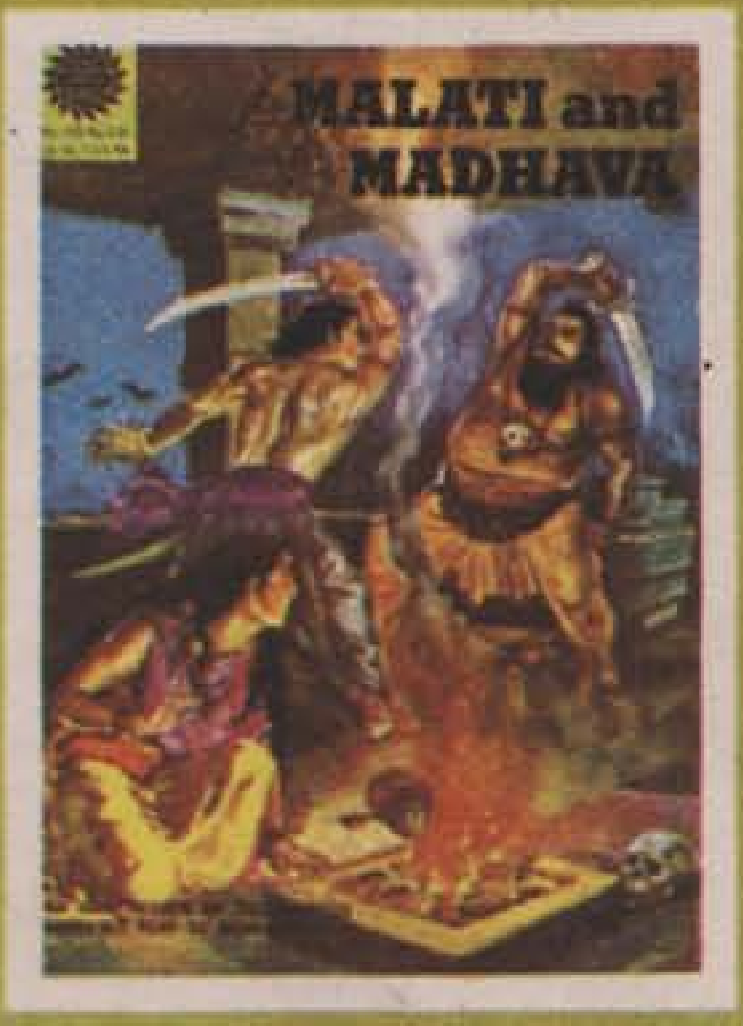


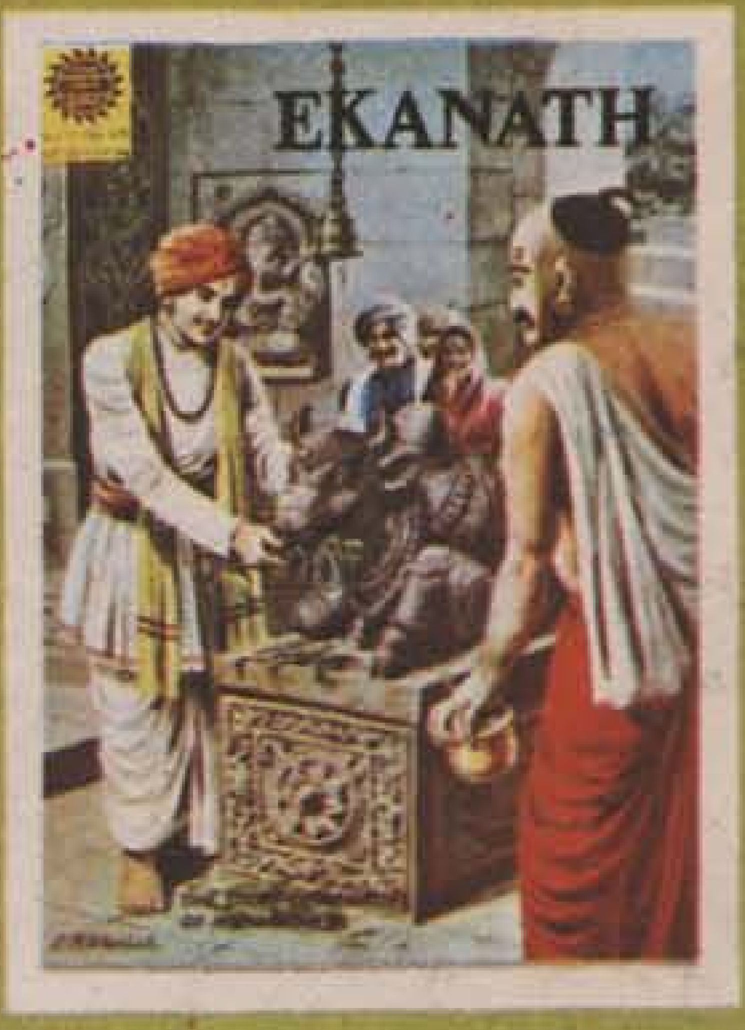


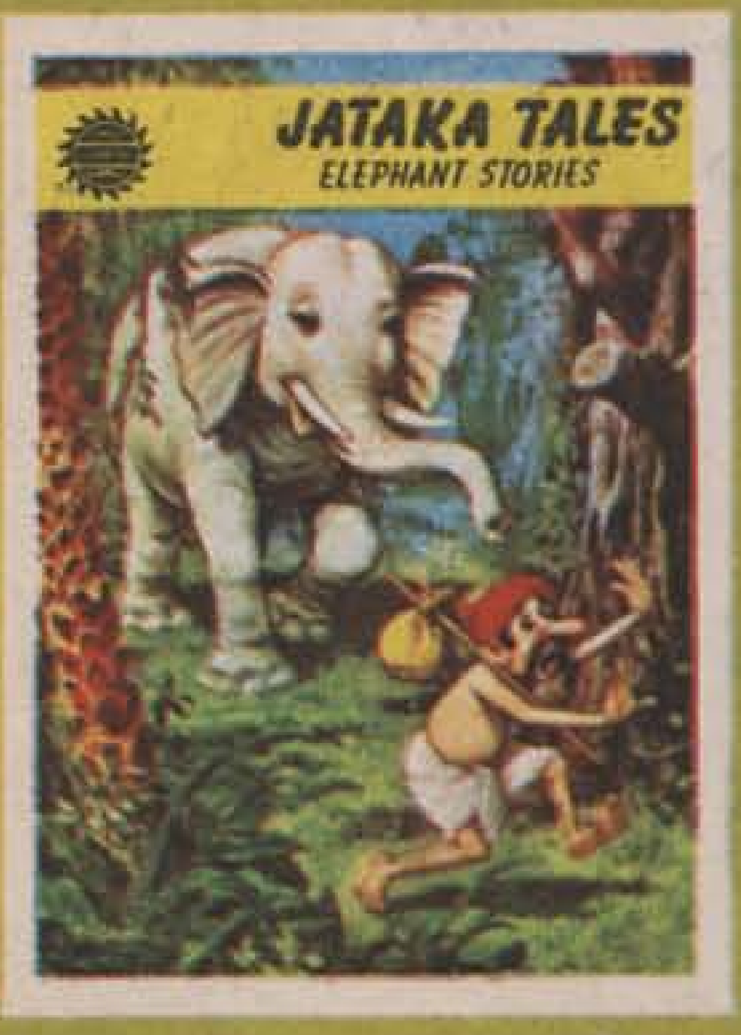



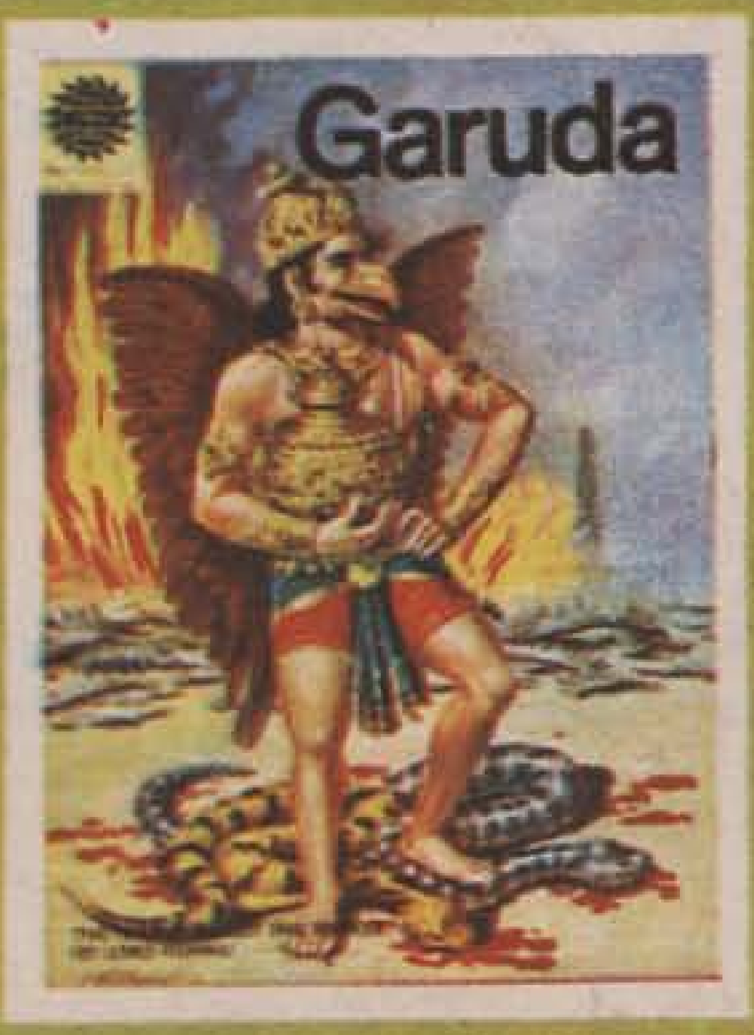







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